

BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

Medical Officer's Report for 1907.

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To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Glastonbury.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg leave to submit to you my report for the year ending 31st December, 1907.

Area.—5,000 Acres.

Area.

Population.—4,016 (Census 1901).

Population.

Geology.—The higher and more populated parts of the Borough: Lower Lias, Clay, and Limestone; the lower and outlying districts: Alluvium Peat.

Geology.

Occupation.—Manufacturing Rugs and Gloves; Agricultural; a very large number of workers find employment at the Boot and Shoe Factories at Street.

Occupation.

Birth Rate.—Per 1,000 living: 22.90.

Birth Rate.

Death Rate.—,, 13.44.

Death Rate.

Zymotic Rate.—,, Nil.

Zymotic Rate.

Infant Mortality.—Per 1,000 births: 151.1.

Infant Mortality.

Water Supply.

The town has had a good and plentiful supply the whole year.

Water Supply.

In some few houses in Above Town there has been a breakdown in the supply; this might in the future be obviated by placing a storage cistern in each house; the contemplated addition to the pumping system may also help to remedy this difficulty.

In my house-to-house inspection I found a group of houses in Above Town which had not complied with your order that not more than three were to be served from one tap.

Although the quality of the supply appears very good, I would recommend that a bacteriological and chemical examination be made some time during the year; such an analysis has not been made since the Compton water was laid on.

I examined one sample of water from a private source, which I found of good quality.

Sewerage and Drainage.

The Cradlebridge farm continues to answer the purpose of a place for the deposit of the town sewage. The Council are to be congratulated on the purchase of the farm, as now, with the land in their own hands, a great deal more may be done, with expert advice, to treat the sewage in a scientific and profitable method, rendering the effluent inocuous, and so avoid the complaints of owners of surrounding properties. The contemplated extension of the present 15-inch main sewer, or the duplication of the present 9-inch pipes from the Mill Stream to the Sewage Farm, will be an improvement which has long been urgently needed.

Sewerage and Drainage.

Beyond the connecting up of new houses to the main sewer, and the cleansing and disinfecting of the surface-water drains, no work of further importance has been done during the year.

Scavenging.

Scavenging.

The lease of the yard in the Meare Road having terminated, a place for the deposit of the town refuse has been found on the Cradlebridge farm—a better position than the former, as not being so near a main road. Most of the refuse is destroyed by fire.

Prevalence of Disease.

Prevalence of Disease.

The year, on the whole, has been a healthy one, having been free from epidemics of any serious disease. Influenza was prevalent during the first quarter, and there was a slight epidemic of Mumps during the summer.

The deaths registered were 54, as compared with 44 last year; the increase was augmented by an unusual number of accidents and one suicide.

The death-rate has proportionately increased, being 13.44, as compared with 10.95 last year. The increased rate is slightly in excess of the average (13.35) for the last ten years, and compares favourably with last year's rate of 15.4 throughout England and Wales.

After two years of very low Infant Mortality, the death-rate has gone up to 151.1 per 1,000 births, which compares unfavourably with the ten year's average of 122. Five of the 14 deaths were due to premature birth, one from tubercular disease of the intestines, and one accidental.

Three deaths were due to consumption; in two of the cases the rooms where death had taken place were disinfected.

In December a Public Meeting was called by the Mayor, when the claims of the Winsley Sanatorium were thoroughly explained by Dr. L. A. Weatherley. A Committee was formed for the purpose of collecting funds, to which I hope a liberal response will be made by poor and rich; the maintenance of this institution being most necessary, as up to the present time the life and treatment in Sanatoria are the best-known methods of combating this terrible disease, which alone accounts for no less than 60,000 deaths per annum in this country.

A case of Diphtheria, verified by bacteriological examination, is the only case of Zymotic Disease notified; the immediate precautions taken had the desired effect of preventing any spread of the disease. Bronchitis accounts for the largest number of deaths from any one disease, and these were principally among persons of advanced years; in fact more than a quarter of the deaths occurred in people of 70 years of age and over.

Isolation Hospital.

Isolation Hospital.

The use of this Institution has not been required either by this or the Street Urban District Council. Some necessary repairs and improvements have been made during the year.

Disinfection.

Disinfection

A Thresher machine is kept at the Isolation Hospital. Where required, sulphur-dioxide or formalin are used for fumigation and disinfection.

Housing of the Working Classes.

Housing of the Working Classes.

With the Inspector of Nuisances, I have made an inspection of the following districts: Benedict Street, Grope Lane, part of Magdalene Street (including both Almshouses), Chilkwell Street, Bove Town (including Summerhouse Orchard and Coombe Terrace), and part of the Wells Road.

We inspected 169 houses, examining the sanitary offices and enquiring into the number of inhabitants in each house. Twelve were empty. In thirty-three cases some sanitary defect was found; either verbal or written notices were given to abate, and in nearly all instances these have been complied with. There were three cases of over-crowding; two of these have been abated; the other remains to be dealt with. Three of the houses were unfit for human habitation, and should be condemned.

The order made by the Council that not more than two houses should use the same w.-c. is a great sanitary improvement. In most of the cases where this applied, new closets have been built. I hope that at no very distant date the Council will see fit to extend their order and compel every house to be provided with closet accommodation and flushing apparatus.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

Thirteen on the register ; one seller has given up and one has been added to the register. Twenty-seven inspections. The examination of premises and their sanitary surroundings, and of the various utensils, were made. Where necessary, verbal notices were given as to white-washing, the keeping of utensils in a cleaner condition, and the removal of accumulation of manure, and as a rule these were complied with. These are all most necessary precautions for the prevention of contamination of milk ; but, to be certain that the milk is in a condition absolutely fit for human food, there are other most important means that should be taken, and these are (a) the bacteriological examination of the supply from each cow, and (b) the veterinary inspection of suspected animals. These precautions are constantly taken in large towns, and only within the last few months the Medical Officer of Health of Birmingham, in a special report to his Committee, notified the fact that out of the samples examined no less than 23% contained the bacillus of consumption. It is now beyond doubt a fact that this disease is conveyed to human beings through milk. The Council would, I think, be wise in considering whether some steps might not be taken to find out the condition of the milk supply in this town.

Dairies, Cowsheds,
and Milkshops.

Slaughter-houses.

Six on register. Sixteen inspections, including the Colonial meat-shop. As a rule, they are kept fairly clean. Notices given for white-washing, repairing of floors, and the removal of offal have been attended to. As with the milk, so with the meat supply of the town, a constant supervision is necessary ; this can only be done in a satisfactory manner by the animals being slaughtered under one roof ; for this and other reasons often brought to your notice before, I again urge on the Council the necessity of providing a public slaughter-house.

Slaughter-houses.

Bake-houses.

Six on register ; one has been given up. Thirteen inspections. Most of them kept clean, and well looked after.

Bake-houses.

Public Elementary Schools.

I have visited the schools on several occasions during each term, and, where my attention has been drawn, excluded children who were suffering from ringworm or contagious skin-diseases, or who were verminous. I have also seen that the sanitary offices and lobbies were cleansed and white-limed before the beginning of each term.

Public Elementary
Schools.

I visited the Cooking Class, and was glad to see the intelligent interest the girls took in their lesson, which cannot fail to stand them in good stead in after life. I am glad the classes are to be continued during the present year. Under the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, a medical man is to be appointed to examine all the children in the Elementary Schools, to report on their physical and mental condition, and to advise parents as to what should be done in cases requiring treatment. He will also have to enquire as to the healthiness and sanitary condition of the school building and the homes of the children. The idea of the examination is an excellent one, involving a vast amount of work on the part of the examiner, if thoroughly carried out in accordance with the memorandum on the subject published by the Board of Education ; but if done in a casual way will become only a costly farce.

Factory and Workshop Act.

Twenty-six on the register. Twenty-six inspections. The work-rooms are clean and well looked after, complying in every way with the terms of the Act. Two nuisances were brought to the notice of owners, and these were immediately abated. The lists of out-workers have come to hand more regularly than was the case last year. There are still two or three defaulters.

Factory and
Workshop Act.

Common Lodging House.

Inspected. Orders given for some sanitary defects to be remedied, which were complied with.

Common Lodging-
house

Bye Laws.

Same code in force ; their revision is in contemplation.

Bye-laws.

My best thanks are again due to the Inspector of Nuisances for the kind help he has given me during the year. Appended are the six tables of Statistics.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
A. ALEX. BLAKISTON,
Medical Officer of Health.

Inspector's Report of the Sanitary Work completed in the year 1907

To A. A. BLAKISTON, Esq., Medical Officer of Health.

SIR,—Herewith I beg to hand you my report for the year ended December 31st, 1907. Inspections have also been made, in company with yourself, under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, of Milkshops, Dairies, Cowstalls, Slaughter-houses, and Workshops, but these are not included in the foregoing analysis.

During the year, we have been entirely free from any epidemic. Disinfection by fumigation, etc., was carried out in the house where an isolated case of Diphtheria occurred. I have also in two cases, as directed by you, disinfected after Consumption. Bedding, etc., was destroyed where death had occurred from Cancer in the Women's Almshouses.

Five cases of over-crowding have been dealt with, and in one instance in a summary manner.

Yours truly,

GEORGE ALVES, Sanitary Inspector.